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I. Organizational matters

1. The annual session 2004 of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA met from 14 to 23 June in Geneva. At the session, the Executive Board approved the agenda and work plan for its annual session 2004 (DP/2004/L.2), as orally amended, and the report on the first regular session 2004 (DP/2004/14).

2. It agreed in decision 2004/25 to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 2004 and 2005:

Second regular session 2004:	20 to 24 September 2004
First regular session 2005:	24 to 28 January 2005
Annual session 2005:	13 to 24 June 2005 (New York)
Second regular session 2005:	19 to 23 September 2005

3. The introductory statement by the President was posted on the web site of the Executive Board secretariat at www.undp.org/execbrd.

4. Decisions adopted at the annual session 2004 were included in document DP/2004/33 accessible at www.undp.org/execbrd.

UNDP segment

II. Annual report of the Administrator

5. In introducing his annual report 2003 (DP/2004/16, Add.1 and 2), the Administrator expressed his confidence that 2005 would prove to be a turning point for development, and proposed a five-track programme to prepare the United Nations response.

6. Would the United Nations be ready for success, he speculated, if – following world leaders' review of the Millennium Declaration at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly in 2005 – the global bargain of reform and resources, underpinned by the mutual accountability struck at Monterrey, would hold – allowing the "radical course correction" needed to shift the world back on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the 2015 deadline.

7. In urging the United Nations and UNDP to seize the opportunities presented in 2005, the Administrator underlined that the impact of the new UNDP and its success would be judged in large part by its contribution to the broader reform agenda in the United Nations system and the wider development community. Without seriously undertaking the United Nations reform agenda, the successful efforts to mobilize political will and resources around the MDGs might run the risk of failing at the moment of implementation.

8. North and South alike warned, he underlined, that the international community had to pay as much attention to the quality of aid as it did to its quantity.

9. To prepare UNDP to seize the opportunities of 2005, the Administrator identified five reform tracks on which the United Nations development system needed to make progress:

(a) *Programme alignment* – to root all development activities in a country in national strategies for achieving the MDGs;

(b) *Simplification and harmonization* – of United Nations programme procedures and cycles to keep up with best donor and national practice;

(c) *Ideas and institutions* – the United Nations strength – to support countries in capacity building and leading ideas on key issues;

(d) *Rationalizing field presence* – to ensure programme countries obtained the maximum value out of United Nations support;

(e) *Strengthening the resident coordinator system* – and increasing its accountability to drive strategic coherence and outcomes.

10. The forthcoming triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPR) exercise offered an opportunity to make progress in each area.

11. The Administrator highlighted, in particular, plans to strengthen the resident coordinator system by appointing country directors in the largest programme countries, where the task of performing all the functions of resident coordinator, resident representative and designated security official had become too vast for a single person.

12. He also drew particular attention to the burgeoning partnership between the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UNDP. The organization would offer UNIDO representatives the opportunity to have desks in UNDP country offices and a dedicated role in the UNDP knowledge management system at the global, subregional and national levels. The UNIDO-UNDP partnership could serve as a model for further collaboration aimed at reducing field costs while increasing programmes. It would also provide countries with additional service lines.

13. On UNDP associated funds and programmes, the Administrator noted that raising the profile of volunteerism through the work of the United Nations Volunteers was also a key factor in achieving the MDGs. He underscored the UNDP commitment to working closely with the United Nations Development Fund for Women through mainstreaming gender in UNDP programming and the co-location of UNIFEM substantive support in subregional resource facilities.

14. The Administrator informed the Executive Board that UNDP was studying ways to integrate the work of the United Nations Capital Development Fund in UNDP programmes, while looking for ways to revitalize the Fund in the light of questions raised about its viability.

15. Delegations expressed strong support for the Administrator's call for the organization to renew and make clear its commitment to United Nations reform, and to seize the opportunities presented in 2005.

16. They endorsed the five reform tracks identified by the Administrator, highlighting in particular the organization's progress in areas such as joint programming, common reporting, local ownership, capacity building and knowledge management. Delegations backed the Administrator's vision of supporting the

United Nations system in its strategic country demand-driven technical assistance activities and looked forward to his proposals for implementation of an improved enabling environment for development.

17. Commending the proposed UNDP-UNIDO partnership, delegations advocated similar cooperation with other United Nations organizations. The Executive Board raised the possibility of inviting the Director General of UNIDO to attend its second regular session in September 2004.

18. Appreciation for donor contributions was coupled with a renewed appeal to step up funding. Several delegations announced significant increases in funding, including pledges covering the multi-year funding framework (MYFF), 2004-2007.

19. The need for institutions at all levels to make a strong commitment to gender equality and North-South balance was underlined, and details on how UNDP would mainstream gender in all aspects of its work requested.

20. While highlighting the key role of the private sector in driving economic growth, delegations recognized its complexity and called for clearer analysis of UNDP successes and failures. Delegations also requested more details on how UNDP intended to strengthen the resident coordinator system. UNDP should ensure that procurement was above reproach.

21. The Administrator responded by expressing his appreciation to delegations for their strong support for his proposed five reform tracks, and thanked those delegations that had pledged increased funding and urged others to follow suit. He stated that there should be no doubt about the seriousness of UNDP efforts in gender. He concluded by reassuring the Executive Board that UNDP did not consider itself a procurement agent and hoped that there had not been a lack of transparency in that area.

22. The Executive Board took note of the annual report of the Administrator 2003 (DP/2004/16 and Add.2) and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (DP/2004/16/Add.1).

III. United Nations Capital Development Fund

23. In discussing documents DP/2004/17, DP/2004/18 and DP/2004/19 on the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), delegations, while noting that the Fund was effective, efficient and highly relevant, emphasized the stark paradox regarding the decline in core funding that threatened its viability.

24. The independent impact assessment (DP/2004/18) found the Fund to be an effective organization that had successfully aligned its programmes and activities with its policies. It concluded that Fund operations had contributed to significant results through both microfinance and local governance programmes in poverty reduction, policy impact, and replication of its projects by donors. UNCDF areas of expertise were found to be very much in demand in least developed countries (LDCs) to respond to the MDGs and country needs.

25. However, the independent evaluation also found that the effectiveness of the UNCDF business model required a stable, sustained level of donor funding that had not been achievable in the existing environment. An urgent revision of the UNCDF business model was recommended to ensure its viability.

26. A number of delegations suggested that the financial crisis was a result of the change in donor funding trends, and did not reflect the Fund's efficacy. Indeed, the new or increased contributions of some donors to UNCDF were a recognition of the Fund's development effectiveness.

27. Early on three options were identified as the crux of the debate on the future of the Fund. The Executive Board could seek to (a) retain UNCDF as a separate UNDP fund; (b) take the necessary steps to integrate UNCDF fully within UNDP, while maintaining the Fund's core comparative advantages, after full consideration of the implications; or (c) decide to close UNCDF operations to avoid a lingering, unresolved situation.

28. But the Fund, delegations asserted, could not be allowed to fail as it played a central role in supporting the MDGs by reaching the very poorest communities in the LDCs. Indeed, the return on investment in UNCDF was so high that closure was not an option. Programme countries, in particular, underlined the importance for the Fund in their countries and regions, confirming their willingness to work with and support UNCDF now and in the future.

29. Delegations pointed to two indispensable UNCDF niches contributing to MDG achievement in the LDCs: its work to promote local governance and access to financial services. Regarding the latter, it was noted that UNCDF had an important role to play in the forthcoming International Year of Microfinance in 2005.

30. While suggesting that greater alignment with UNDP operations might serve to give UNDP greater access to UNCDF expertise, facilitate wider impact of UNCDF, and possibly help to resolve UNCDF funding problems, it was emphasized that the Fund's future should not be discussed solely in simplification and harmonization terms, which might risk neglecting the source of UNCDF comparative advantages. Concerned about the image of UNCDF, it was suggested that the Fund needed to do more to raise its profile and boost its visibility.

31. Delegations affirmed that efforts to restore UNCDF financial health would necessitate a clear assessment of available funding and business model options, which delegations requested for the second regular session in September 2004.

32. In response, the Associate Administrator and the Deputy Executive Secretary/Officer-in-Charge, UNCDF, thanked delegations for their strong expressions of support for UNCDF work, and assured delegations that UNDP and UNCDF would continue to collaborate closely with Member States to develop funding solutions and an enhanced business model for the Fund urgently.

33. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/13 on the United Nations Capital Development Fund.

IV. Funding commitments

34. In discussing document DP/2004/20, delegations commended the Administrator for his leadership in redressing the organization's financial stability.

35. Numerous delegations stated their commitment to make multi-year pledges based on MYFF targets, and to increase funding to regular resources. In parallel, programme countries welcomed the multi-year pledges already made by several donors, and appealed to all donors to increase their funding commitments to UNDP.

36. Many delegations welcomed the positive funding assessment and thanked the Administrator for his leadership. Several delegations echoed the need to share the funding burden and to have a more predictable resource base buttressed by multi-year pledges against established payment schedules.

37. The importance of core contributions was stressed by various delegations, underlining its importance for effective development at the field level. And they encouraged stakeholders to give priority to regular (core) over other (non-core) resource contributions.

38. While the funding base had not yet been fully restored, delegations noted with satisfaction that MYFF targets were within reach. Current optimism was based on the 15 per cent increase in core funding in 2003, owing partly to favourable exchange rate fluctuations, which had been matched by a clear upward trend in UNDP total income. So while it had fallen behind on the previous MYFF targets, the organization was on track to reach the current MYFF targets. However, delegations noted that the organization was always exposed to the risk of negative exchange rate fluctuations, and stressed the importance of addressing the difficult UNCDF situation.

39. A few delegations echoed the Administrator's concern about the organization's dependence on a limited number of donors, stressing the need to strengthen stakeholder commitment to ensure that resource levels reach targeted goals. They encouraged UNDP to seek ways in which to attract new donors in an effort to bolster the organization's long-term viability and reach the $1.1 billion target set by the Board.

40. The Administrator thanked delegations for their commitments and increases in core multi-year contributions based on MYFF targets, while underlining the benefit of balancing off funding contributions among donors.

41. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/14 on funding commitments to UNDP.

V. Country programmes and related matters

42. The Executive Board reviewed the second one-year extension of the second country cooperation frameworks for Chile and Uruguay, the two-year extension for the second country cooperation framework for Zimbabwe and the one-year extensions for the second country cooperation frameworks for Belarus, Hungary, Latvia and Slovakia (DP/2004/21). The Board also provided comments on the first draft country programme documents for Angola, Burundi, Lesotho, Madagascar; Islamic Republic of Iran, the Philippines; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan; and Argentina.

43. Delegations underlined the need for greater financial commitment and other means to attract funding, in particular cost-sharing mechanisms. There was a suggestion to consider the possibility of local financing for programmes. They encouraged further and clearer links between country programmes, the MYFF and the PRSPs, and more joint planning with all partners, including donors, in areas of

mutual interest. They requested greater coherence in monitoring and reporting as well.

44. Some delegations noted with satisfaction the inclusion of gender as a cross-cutting theme in 13 country programmes, but expressed regret that little mention was made of the important role of women in poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and disaster management.

45. More assistance was requested for post-conflict countries and countries with economies in transition, which could well become donor countries. There was a request to include more information on human security and to promote the human security trust fund, despite the absence of international consensus on its definition.

46. Human rights and the promotion of democratic governance were also highlighted as areas that country programmes should cover more comprehensively. Criticism of human rights standards and the promotion of democratic governance, however, should not fail to mention efforts made or focus explicitly on a country's internal affairs.

47. The Executive Board took note of the first draft country programme documents and comments made thereon for Angola, Burundi, Lesotho, Madagascar; Islamic Republic of Iran, the Philippines; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan; and Argentina, prior to the finalization of the country programmes, as well as the one-year extensions for the second country cooperation frameworks for Belarus, Hungary, Latvia and Slovakia, already approved by the Administrator.

48. The Executive Board approved the second one-year extension of the second country cooperation frameworks for Chile and Uruguay, and the two-year extension for the second country cooperation framework for Zimbabwe.

VI. Human Development Report

49. In discussing the update on *Human Development Report* consultations (DP/2004/22) delegations commended the Director, Human Development Report Office (HDRO), for her commitment to ensuring extensive, quality consultations in putting together the annual reports.

50. While generally pleased with the statistical base used in the report, delegations pointed out that nationally and internationally compiled data must be compatible, which would better reflect realities on the ground and avoid negatively portraying countries. They underlined the need to ensure the use of most recent, impartial data, with sources clearly attributed. One delegation suggested including important national indicators in the reports.

51. Another delegation suggested inviting the contributors of the report to attend informal consultations. In support for the forthcoming report on cultural liberty, it was stressed that culture should not be viewed as an obstacle to humanity's growth.

52. In response, the Director, HDRO, confirmed that consultations over the previous year had in fact treated substantive issues closely. In particular, she assured delegations that HDRO was working at national and international levels to cull balanced, legitimate data and information. However, discrepancies between national

data from national statistical authorities and international series provided by organizations such as the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Health Organization were inevitable. That was the case because national data needed to be harmonized and because there were sometimes differences in methodology. Because it was a user, not a producer, of data, HDRO was proactively promoting better communication between national and international authorities to reduce inconsistencies. She concluded by reiterating the continued commitment of HDRO to ensuring a constructive consultation process with stakeholders at all levels.

53. The Executive Board took note of the update on *Human Development Report* consultations (DP/2004/22)

VII. United Nations Office for Project Services

54. In discussing document DP/2004/23, delegations urged United Nations organizations to do business with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), while encouraging the Management Coordination Committee (MCC) to support it in expanding business acquisition, and UNDP to engage UNOPS more in the provision of common services.

55. They emphasized that UNOPS had to remain financially viable in the short and long term. Given the organization's limiting outsourcing nature and the existing critical state of business acquisition and project delivery, there was discussion as to whether it was advisable to envision changing its mandate.

56. That UNOPS had begun working with regional development banks on common projects drew praise and encouragement, as well as support for expanding its activities in engineering, infrastructure and public works in direct cooperation with host governments.

57. While the proposal to offer services directly to host governments was welcomed, caution was voiced over obstructing fledgling private sectors. Delegations requested further information on the proposal, including details on UNOPS experiences and capacity building efforts to address similar challenges.

58. Delegations asked when the change management process was forecast to end, how vital diversification was to UNOPS future, and what potential there was for new business. Asserting that UNOPS should not use its operational reserve, one delegation suggested strict budget monitoring as a means of dealing with the potential increase in expenditures. Mindful of the organization's current financial and business challenges, delegations concurred that the Executive Board should allow UNOPS a flexible timeframe to implement solutions.

59. As the principal aim was to reduce UNOPS decline in business with United Nations organizations, careful Board analysis was critical, in particular with regard to issues of procurement and fee structures. A request to hold an informal meeting before the second regular session in September was voiced.

60. Delegations also requested a report at the second regular session 2004 detailing business projections for 2004-2006, plans to overcome current obstacles, problems with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), experiences of working in post-conflict situations and measures to regain the confidence of core clients.

61. In response, the Administrator commended the Executive Director, UNOPS, stating that he and his team had the full support of the MCC. While UNOPS had begun rebuilding the confidence of clients, the business climate had changed and classic partnerships, such as that between UNOPS and UNDP, were under great pressure. It was imperative that UNOPS develop other business. Delivering value to programme countries was not easy but necessary in order to make UNOPS viable once again.

62. The Executive Director said that UNOPS intended to work with local contractors, builders, architects and engineers in programme countries to facilitate capacity building on the ground. It would continue to expand its work with the international financial institutions. Both procurement and infrastructure were evolving into key areas for UNOPS. He indicated that at the outset the core provisions of the change management period would last no more than two years. With regard to ERP, measures were being taken to speed up installation, take advantage of the system's functionality, improve staff skills and clean data effectively.

63. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/15 on the United Nations Office for Project Services.

VIII. United Nations Volunteers

64. In discussing document DP/2004/24, delegations expressed enthusiasm for the important role played by United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in raising the profile of volunteerism as part of the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001, managing the growth and placement of volunteers and putting the MDGs at the centre of its work. They commended UNV efforts to align its programme frameworks with the goals established in the MYFF and ROAR.

65. Many tributes were paid to Ms. Sharon Capeling-Alakija, former Executive Coordinator, for her dedication to the values of volunteerism and her indelible legacy and guidance of UNV.

66. Delegations noted with satisfaction that the number of serving UNV volunteers, assignments, countries of origin, countries of assignment and volunteers from developing countries had increased for the seventh consecutive year.

67. They praised in particular several national programmes that had been set up with UNV support, and the special role played by UNV volunteers in bridging the gap between relief and development.

68. Delegations recommended that UNV enhance results-oriented reporting, provide more thorough analysis of the development impact of programme activities and the challenges in implementing lessons learnt, and build on pilot partnerships.

69. Noting that the programme was essentially demand-driven, many delegations encouraged increased contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund, which allowed UNV to experiment with new projects and partners.

70. Delegates enquired about the UNV role in peacekeeping operations, what could be done to improve impact analysis and what measures UNV was taking to promote knowledge management and sharing, including by assisting former volunteers to gain regular staff assignments in United Nations organizations. A request was made

for further information on UNV collaboration with the United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations, with details on lessons learnt.

71. UNV was asked to identify areas in which it could envisage doing less, what specific activities could be targeted for Internet programmes to reach remote areas, and what UNV would require to carry out its functions more effectively.

72. One notable area of inter-agency collaboration was preparation for the forthcoming conference on volunteerism to be held in Islamabad in December 2004 organized in cooperation with UNDP and UNV. One United Nations organization stressed the important role of UNV volunteers in facing the HIV/AIDS epidemic and, in particular, involving people living with HIV/AIDS.

73. One non-governmental organization (NGO) observer made specific reference to the importance of a recently concluded agreement with UNV, established, inter alia, to work together in promoting an enabling environment for voluntary action.

74. In response, the Executive Coordinator, a.i., acknowledged that the reporting system required change. UNV had undertaken results-based management, which would facilitate improved reporting in the future. While no substitute for employment, volunteering was a good use of people's time and helped to retain dignity when paid work was unavailable. In that sense, unemployed graduates should be encouraged to volunteer. UNV played no part in deciding whether peacekeeping operations should be mounted, but provided staff for such operations, as UNV staff could be identified and mobilized quickly. As a United Nations programme, UNV made efforts to maximize the safety and security of volunteers, while trying not to limit their effectiveness. Many former volunteers had indeed gone on to gain employment in the United Nations system.

75. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/16 on the United Nations Volunteers.

IX. Evaluation

76. In discussing document DP/2004/25 on evaluation, delegations commended UNDP for progress made in aligning the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) reports, while stressing the need to clarify how the organization could best contribute to the process. Some delegations suggested that all future management response papers include an action plan or summary of proposed actions.

77. They encouraged UNDP to continue to strengthen working relations with the Bretton Woods institutions on linking PRSPs to MDGs, while requesting more information on the UNDP proposal to collaborate with the World Bank in order to operationalize the PRSP-MDG linkage in pilot countries.

78. The synergy between the monitoring and campaigning units had yet to be fully utilized. Links between MDG reports and PRSP annual progress reports were still unclear. One delegation queried whether it were possible to use the PRSPs to measure progress towards reaching the MDGs. Delegations also sought further clarification on UNDP collaboration with the Millennium Project. One delegation asked about the origin of poverty reduction initiatives, and whether any originated in middle-income countries.

79. In response, the Principal Advisor and Group Leader of the Poverty Group, Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), highlighted the importance of using common indicators to strengthen PRSP-MDG reporting links. With the World Bank, UNDP had identified indicator sets that were most relevant to annual changes. He reiterated the United Nations commitment to ensuring that development models were nationally owned and based on frank policy dialogue and wide participation among stakeholders, whose constructive role, he asserted, depended on their statistical literacy.

80. The Macro, Growth and Structural Policies Advisor, Poverty Reduction Group, BDP, added that UNDP had proposed working with the World Bank to ensure PRSP-MDG links, for both monitoring and pro-poor policies, by targeting specific PRSP countries in the both the early and later stages of strategy formulation. The common, global project Poverty and Social Impact Analysis would provide an additional opportunity for such collaboration.

81. UNDP was also seeking to collaborate with the Millennium Project in countries where similar studies were conducted, with UNDP specializing on promoting long-term capacity development for poverty reduction. Financial constraints, however, meant that in addition to official development assistance, countries needed to mobilize more national resources and foster public and private investment for growth and development. To achieve the MDGs, he also emphasized that many countries, especially in Africa, needed greater debt relief.

82. The Executive Board took note of the report on follow-up on evaluations with regard to PRSPs and MDG reports and addressing the PRSP-MDG linkages (DP/2004/25).

XVII. Technical cooperation among developing countries

83. In discussing the report on the implementation of South-South cooperation (DP/2004/26), delegations led by members of the Group of 77 welcomed the report and expressed their readiness to support South-South cooperation initiatives, especially in the areas of technical capacity building, provision of micro-credit to small businesses, health and resource mobilization.

84. Delegations emphasized that South-South cooperation was a necessary complement to North-South cooperation, but must not replace it. Both modes of cooperation provided an ideal framework in which to foster peaceful relations among countries and secure the well-being of populations. Technical cooperation and resource mobilization should thrive both between South-South and North-South.

85. They expressed their satisfaction with the work on triangular cooperation, whereby a donor country financed a South-South cooperation initiative. South-South cooperation should thus serve to promote inter-regional cooperation, intra-regional assistance, and regional integration efforts, areas which should be considered when formulating the third cooperation framework, along with a clearer strategy for utilizing existing trust funds.

86. Innovative ways of combating the brain drain from South to North were urgently needed. Developing countries considered South-South cooperation an appropriate mechanism through which to harness the benefits of globalization and bridge the digital divide separating developed and developing countries. There was a call to

engage more closely with the private sector and with educational institutions to promote information and communication technologies.

87. Delegations appreciated the reasons given by the Administrator in his opening remarks regarding the somewhat extended transition period before the appointment of the new director for the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation. They thereby supported his intention to bring on new leadership once a strengthened, streamlined unit had been set up with a clear mandate approved by the Board at its second regular session in September 2004.

88. Delegations looked forward to informal consultations to discuss in more detail the third cooperation framework, which would be submitted to the Executive Board at its second regular session 2004.

89. The Executive Board took note of the report on the implementation of South-South cooperation (DP/2004/26).

XX. Gender in UNDP

90. In discussing document DP/2004/31, delegations commended UNDP for making gender one of the five key 'drivers' of the second MYFF, 2004-2007, and for ensuring that managers and staff would be held accountable for mainstreaming gender in all service lines and throughout the organization.

91. They commended UNDP for its good progress and encouraged it to achieve the 50/50 gender balance by 2010 at the institutional level. Delegations commended the corporate initiative to conduct a formal assessment of UNDP work on gender by an independent team but stressed the need for immediate tangible action. They underscored the need to adopt a country-specific perspective and to ensure that both men and women were part of initiatives and solutions. Delegations were also hopeful to see a growth in micro-credit projects to assist women.

92. More information was requested on the timeframe and lines of responsibility for measures indicated in the report. They encouraged UNDP systematically to mainstream gender in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and common country assessment processes, and highlighted the importance of gender in reaching the MDGs by 2015.

93. While mindful of the difficulties in measuring gender results, delegations emphasized that responsibility for gender mainstreaming lied with UNDP and that implementation of the recommendations in the mainstreaming report should begin promptly. An action plan with concrete targets, measurable actions and indicators on gender mainstreaming should be drawn up.

94. Delegations sought further clarification on the main elements of the UNDP partnership with UNIFEM, in particular with regard to greater integration of programming at the regional level, joint programmes and unity of leadership on gender equality.

95. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/21 on the management response to "Transforming the Mainstream: Gender in UNDP" and decision 2004/22 on gender balance in UNDP.

Joint UNDP/UNFPA segment

X. Internal audit and oversight

96. In discussing documents DP/2004/27, DP/FPA/2004/6 and DP/2004/28 on UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS internal audit and oversight, respectively, delegations underscored the apparent lack of remedial action to address weaknesses identified in internal audits.

97. Some delegations requested that the organizations develop a harmonized framework to resolve the issues contained in the audit reports. Delegations wished to know if efficiency and processing of audit functions had ameliorated thanks to recent implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

98. There was also concern over the reduced number of UNDP audits, in particular with regard to country offices, and what procedure was followed when country officers performed poorly. Delegations stressed the importance of keeping tabs to ensure that resources were accounted for and spent accordingly.

99. With regard to cost-recovery policy, the organization should ensure that core resources did not subsidize non-core resources. Another delegation queried how cost-recovery and fee services were applied in the absence of clear written memoranda of understanding. With regard to procurement activities, delegations supported their monitoring via reporting. It was suggested, however, that UNDP should avoid performing procurement activities in the place of governments, to ensure that accountability lines were not blurred.

100. With regard to UNFPA, delegations stated that country offices should be diligent in following up on audit recommendations and asked what mechanisms existed for sharing lessons within the United Nations system. Timely financial reporting was essential for accountability.

101. Delegations agreed that a framework containing concrete objectives, and a time-path and indicators for the resolution of issues contained in the audit reports should be presented by the three organizations to the Executive Board at its second regular session 2004 for review to improve follow-up to audits. The Board also asked UNDP to report at the same session on proposed measures to establish an enhanced cost-recovery mechanism.

102. The Associate Administrator said that ERP implementation had been successful. An in-depth review was planned in all three organizations adopting the new system. UNDP was working with UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP to ensure that a consistent national audit strategy was followed, providing reasonable assurance that funds were used for intended purposes while minimizing the burden on governments. A draft strategy would be submitted to the United Nations Development Group later in the year. Moreover, the Office for Audit and Performance Review (OAPR) change process was near completion, with few vacant posts remaining.

103. The Officer in Charge, OAPR, while sharing delegates' concerns about the decline in the number of audits in 2003, stated, however, that 2003 had been an atypical year, owing largely to the impact of OAPR comprehensive restructuring. Despite the low number of audits, the Officer in Charge, believed that overall there

was not a significant impact on internal controls because OAPR was able to keep abreast of significant issues – both through informal means such as facilitating workshops and more formal systems such as global staff survey and partnership survey – and focused its resources on high risk offices.

104. In addition to the risk assessments, annual and continuous, undertaken by OAPR, OAPR would be spearheading a corporate risk assessment that will involve UNDP managers. While UNDP has done some informal assessments in the past, the goal will be to undertake a more comprehensive assessment and feed it into a refinement of the UNDP internal control framework. While memoranda of understanding were in place for all agencies covering cost-recovery, some issues of legal liability had yet to be clarified.

105. The Officer in Charge also commented that a key mechanism for ensuring that lessons learnt by one organization were shared with the rest of the United Nations system was through an annual meeting of the heads of internal audit.

106. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) welcomed further discussion on the requested framework, particularly with the proposed deadline being unrealistic. She noted the various initiatives under way in UNFPA to strengthen accountability. She stated that lessons were shared, inter alia, through the Fund's Oversight Committee that included members from other United Nations organizations. The Director of the Fund's Division for Oversight Services assured the Executive Board that UNFPA would continue to do risk analysis. She noted that the Fund's Geographical Divisions were diligently following up with country offices on audit recommendations. She stated that the operations managers in country offices would play a key role in systematic follow-up to audits and in strengthening the management of office operations in general.

107. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/17 on internal audit and oversight for UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS.

XI. Programming process

108. Delegations expressed satisfaction with the progress demonstrated in documents DP/2004/29-DP/FPA/2004/7 and DP/2004/30-DP/FPA/2004/8. They were concerned, however, that the existing process of 18 to 24 months between analysis and implementation of the country programme might be too lengthy to respond to changing situations at the country level, thereby delaying relevant programme implementation.

109. In addition, the presentation of the country programme document only at the annual session would not provide the flexibility to meet national cycles. One delegation was not convinced that evidence pointed to the need for such flexibility.

110. With regard to joint programming, delegations attached great importance to streamlining and harmonizing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and common country assessment among United Nations organizations with national development strategies to achieve the MDGs. Such alignment was expected to improve programme delivery, reduce administrative costs and establish a single United Nations presence in countries. Donors were encouraged to be flexible, adjust to simplified and harmonized procedures and accept common reporting. Delegations commended UNDP and UNFPA for the revised Guidance

Note on Joint Programming, and encouraged them to implement it as soon as possible.

111. Delegations noted that while joint programming was a process that would ensure a coordinated approach for United Nations organizations to achieve results, joint programmes should emerge from this process as practical responses to the local situation. In addition, delegations supported the suggestion for donors to accept harmonized reporting, although specific contributions would not be identifiable.

112. They observed, however, that UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA cost structures were not yet harmonized and would continue to have different overhead and cost-recovery rates. Delegations asserted that funding mechanisms should use harmonized procedures as far as possible, and the Board should endeavour to send consistent messages to Executive Committee and non-Executive Committee agencies.

113. Delegations, noting that joint programming was positive, as it increased effectiveness and reduced transaction costs, requested more information on joint programming experiences and the percentage of total resources allocated to joint programming, and on joint reporting.

114. In response, the Director, Bureau for Development Policy, concurred that the approval process for country programmes could be shortened. But he asserted that because they responded both to immediate and long-term issues, country programmes had to be able to stand the test of time and support the MDGs. He indicated that UNDP could be more flexible in the country programme approval process, but it required Board guidance.

115. He noted the importance of making the UNDAF results matrix more of a strategic instrument, as opposed to a negotiated document. Doing so would help to ensure its unified, effective use for identifying joint programmes at the country level.

116. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, welcomed the encouraging comments. She noted that the Guidance Note provided clear distinction between joint programmes and joint programming. The note included guidance on which modality to use in which circumstance with a view to reducing transaction costs.

117. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/18 on progress in implementing decision 2001/11 and decision 2004/19 on joint programming.

XII. Field visits

118. Delegations thanked the rapporteurs from El Salvador and Eritrea for introducing, respectively, the reports on the joint field visit to Guatemala (DP/2004/CRP.4–DP/FPA/2004/CRP.3) and the field visit to Ukraine (DP/2004/CRP.5–DP/FPA/2004/CRP.4).

119. They emphasized the importance of field visits in enabling Bureau members to gain first-hand experience of the United Nations convening power, its capital of trust and its neutrality. With regard to the joint visit to Guatemala, they underlined the key role the organizations could play in fostering peace and promoting the political participation of indigenous groups. Delegations encouraged further efforts to

simplify and harmonize agency efforts, which would greatly benefit the resident coordinator system.

120. With regard to the field visit to Ukraine, the benefits of cost-sharing were highlighted along with the need for effective partnerships to enable different perspectives and implementation of country-specific policies. The impact of technical assistance was recognized, and the business centre set up by UNDP should serve as a model for other country offices. The remarkable progress towards building a functioning market economy was noted.

121. Delegations highly commended the substantial positive results that UNFPA had been able to achieve in Ukraine with limited funding, including with regard to integrating medical, social and information/education services related to reproductive health. They underscored the effective interaction between the Government and UNFPA, and their strong working relationship. They encouraged UNFPA to consider developing a country programme for Ukraine.

122. One delegation called for continued international support to address the needs of Chernobyl-affected populations and regions, and encouraged the country's partners to increase their support for national HIV-prevention efforts.

123. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) appreciated the positive comments and thoughtful recommendations and noted that the Fund would like to move to a country programme approach in Ukraine but this would depend on the availability of resources. He stated that UNFPA planned to enhance HIV-prevention efforts, particularly with regard to young people.

124. The Executive Board took note of the reports on the joint field visit to Guatemala (DP/2004/CRP.4–DP/FPA/2004/CRP.3) and the field visit to Ukraine. (DP/2004/CRP.5–DP/FPA/2004/CRP.4)

XVIII. Joint proposals for MYFF reporting

125. In discussing document DP/2004/CRP.6–DP/FPA/2004/CRP.2, delegations expressed their support for harmonized reporting and suggested that UNDP, UNFPA and UNIFEM should also liaise with the United Nations Children's Fund. They would welcome the opportunity to discuss UNDP ideas on objectives but encouraged the organizations to avoid too much focus on process – achieving goals was paramount.

126. Delegations endorsed the joint UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM proposal for harmonized reporting on results as outlined in the report. They underlined, however, the possible need to revert to the issue at a later session in view of the outcome of the triennial comprehensive policy review of United Nations operational activities for development by the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

127. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/20 on joint proposals for reporting on the multi-year funding framework.

XIX. Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP: proposals for 2005

128. The President reminded delegations that the Executive Board had originally planned to discuss the proposals for the joint meeting in 2005 at the present annual session. As the Bureaux of the other Executive Boards of UNICEF and WFP were still discussing the topics to be taken up at the joint meeting, it was proposed to continue to discuss this matter at the Bureau level.

129. The President informed Board members of the general consensus among the three Bureaux on the following four broad topics: (a) HIV/AIDS; (b) simplification and harmonization; (c) transition from relief to development; and (d) gender. He invited delegations to provide their inputs to the Bureau through their respective regional vice-presidents.

UNFPA segment

XIII. Report of the Executive Director for 2003

130. In her opening statement, the Executive Director highlighted that the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda empowered individuals, families, communities and nations. The ICPD Programme of Action had put individuals and human rights – not population numbers and population growth rates – at the centre of the equation. Underscoring the centrality of population and reproductive health issues in eradicating poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), she stated that it was now widely recognized that the MDGs – in particular MDGs 3, 4, 5 and 6 – could not be achieved without achieving the ICPD goal of universal access to reproductive health services. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that the linkages were given visibility at the 2005 General Assembly.

131. She affirmed the Fund's commitment to United Nations reform, noting that the real purpose of the reform was to make the United Nations system more efficient and effective in reaching people and meeting their needs. She observed that UNFPA had been in the forefront of United Nations efforts to develop simplified and harmonized processes and stressed the need to align these processes with those taking place within OECD/DAC. She underscored the importance of building the capacity of countries to achieve the MDGs. She noted the need to further strengthen the resident coordinator system.

132. She emphasized the urgent need to promote activities to link HIV/AIDS and reproductive health initiatives, observing that the linkages should be addressed in national development plans and budgets, poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) processes, sector-wide approaches (SWAps), common country assessments (CCAs) and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). She underscored the critical importance of reproductive health commodity security.

133. Concerning the role of culture, she noted that UNFPA had recently examined its programming approaches in order to develop more inclusive approaches that would encompass culture and religion and the roles played by local power structures and institutions – an approach UNFPA called "working from within". The aim was to add a "culture lens" to UNFPA programming tools and the rights-based approach that was at the heart of the ICPD Programme of Action. The Executive Director concluded by reiterating the Fund's commitment to national capacity-building and to

creating an enabling environment that brought everyone on board in the development process.

134. Delegations congratulated the Executive Director on her visionary and inspiring statement and expressed strong support for UNFPA. They welcomed the Fund's commitment to place the ICPD agenda squarely in the process of achieving the MDGs and underscored that the way to 2015 leads through Cairo. They emphasized that UNFPA remained the main advocate and catalyst of the ICPD agenda and played a crucial role in assisting countries in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. Commending UNFPA for its commitment to cultural sensitivity in programme design, delegations noted that this led to higher levels of acceptance and ownership by the community.

135. Delegations acknowledged the Fund's contributions to reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, providing access to safe and voluntary family planning, combating HIV/AIDs, promoting reproductive health commodity security, mainstreaming gender, addressing gender-based violence and harmful practices and promoting South-South cooperation. Delegations supported the Fund's focus on adolescent reproductive health issues, including in relation to HIV/AIDS, and underscored the need to integrate reproductive health and HIV/AIDS programmes. They emphasized the need to address the issue of the feminization of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

136. Delegations welcomed UNFPA moving its activities upstream and shifting its focus from projects to policy, particularly the emphasis on reproductive health and rights, and commended the Fund's commitment to rights-based and culturally sensitive programming. They commended and encouraged the Fund's efforts to improve the technical skills of its staff to facilitate enhanced involvement in SWAp and PRSP processes. Regarding making engagement in SWAps mandatory, one delegation asked what this meant in practice, given the Fund's limited resources.

137. One delegation wondered to what extent the geographical dispersion of limited resources negatively impacted the efficiency and effectiveness of the Fund's activities. Another asked for more information about the Fund's partnerships with other development actors. One delegation cautioned against imposing conditionalities and underscored that donor-driven priorities should not overshadow the needs and priorities of programme countries. Delegations welcomed the Fund's increased resources and encouraged the Fund to continue expanding its donor base.

138. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their positive comments and strong support. She appreciated their focus on ICPD goals being a prerequisite to achieving the MDGs. She underscored the Fund's commitment to partnerships, including with WHO, the World Bank, other bilateral and multilateral organizations and NGOs. She reiterated that the Fund was enhancing staff capacity to participate in PRSPs and SWAps. She was encouraged that delegations had emphasized the importance of HIV/AIDS and reproductive health linkages and the need to expand those linkages. She underlined the Fund's commitment to a human-rights approach to programming and stated that an inter-divisional task force had been established to ensure that the linkages between human rights, culture and gender were strengthened in UNFPA programming. Regarding the query on geographical focus, she emphasized that the Fund allocated resources in accordance with criteria approved by the Executive Board, which gave priority to countries with the greatest need. Thus, 67 to 69 per cent of resources were allocated to category "A" countries, which included all the least developed countries.

139. The Executive Director noted that one of the Fund's comparative advantages was the technical assistance it provided for capacity-building. She noted that South-South cooperation was a useful modality for strengthening national capacity-building. Regarding the comment on donor-driven priorities, she stressed that the planning and preparation of UNFPA-supported country programmes was led by the concerned programme countries, in line with national plans and priorities. She fully agreed that programme countries must be in the driver's seat to ensure ownership of programmes and emphasized the Fund's commitment to the principles of universality, neutrality and multilateralism. She noted that UNFPA had facilitated the development of joint programming guidelines. She stressed the need to improve the resident coordinator system. She concluded by expressing deep appreciation for the support to UNFPA and the ICPD Programme of Action.

140. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/23 on the annual report.

XIV. Funding commitments to UNFPA

141. Delegations thanked the Executive Director for her opening remarks; the Chief, Resource Mobilization Branch, for introducing the report on funding commitments to UNFPA (DP/FPA/2004/10); and the Deputy Executive Director (Management) for the explanation regarding lower expenditure in 2003 compared to 2002. Delegations welcomed the lucid and transparent report and commended its high quality.

142. Delegations commended UNFPA efforts to secure funding and welcomed the substantial increase in contributions to the Fund. They were pleased with the Fund's return to the $300 million level of core resources for the first time since 1996, noting that the increased funding reflected donors' confidence in UNFPA. A number of delegations announced their contributions to UNFPA, including multi-year pledges and/or increases. Some delegations hoped to make additional year-end contributions.

143. Encouraging further increased contributions and early payments to facilitate programme planning and implementation, delegations underscored the need for a predictable and secure base of core resources. Some delegations emphasized the joint responsibility to meet the funding targets of the MYFF and urged further discussion on multi-year pledging. One delegation suggested that it would be useful if those engaged in multi-year pledging could explain its feasibility to other interested delegations at an informal side event.

144. While welcoming the Fund's expanding donor base, delegations cautioned against dependence on a small number of donors. One delegation encouraged UNFPA to further explore funding from the private sector. Several delegations took the occasion of the upcoming tenth anniversary of the ICPD to reaffirm their support to UNFPA and their resolve to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.

145. One delegation, while noting its support for United Nations staff security, stated that funds for security should come from assessed contributions.

146. The Executive Director thanked delegations for their support. She conveyed special thanks to countries that had announced increased contributions and multi-year pledges. She specially appreciated the contributions of programme countries that were often made in spite of economic constraints. She noted that in future reporting a table would be included to show programme country contributions to

programmes and local office costs. She welcomed the suggestion regarding a future informal discussion on multi-year pledging. Concerning funding for staff security, she noted that until such time that a decision was taken on assessed contributions from countries, United Nations organizations would have to cover security costs. She concluded by assuring the Executive Board that UNFPA would use its resources in a transparent, effective and accountable manner.

147. The Executive Board adopted decision 2004/24 on funding commitments to UNFPA.

148. Following the adoption of the decision the delegation of the United States of America stated that it had joined the consensus but wished to make an explanation of its position: the United States strongly supported activities including those by UNFPA to implement the goals and objectives of the ICPD as long as they were not understood to mean support for, or advocacy of, abortion. Additionally, the "Road Map" formulation of the Millennium Development Goals was not the same as the internationally agreed development goals. The United States did support the internationally agreed goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration.

XV. Country programmes and related matters

149. Delegations thanked the Deputy Executive Director (Programme), the Directors of the Africa Division, the Division for Arab States and Europe, and the Asia and the Pacific Division, and the UNFPA Representatives from Uzbekistan and Myanmar for their introductory remarks. The Executive Board had before it a two-year extension of the country programme for Zimbabwe; a note on the implementation of the UNFPA special programme of assistance to Myanmar; and 13 draft country programme documents.

150. Delegations commended the quality of the draft country programme documents, particularly the results and resources frameworks. They welcomed the Fund's efforts to harmonize programme cycles with other United Nations organizations, as well as the coordination achieved through the UNDAF process. Delegations appreciated the important role of UNFPA in providing reproductive health care, including family planning. They welcomed the references to Millennium Development Goals and PRSPs and underscored the importance of addressing HIV/AIDS. One delegation noted that the move from free contraceptives to those with fees should be gradual so as not to neglect poor and disadvantaged users. Another asked about constraints encountered at the country level and about culturally sensitive approaches to programming. Some delegations commented on particular aspects of specific draft country programmes.

151. Delegations asked about the impact of the Myanmar programme and wondered if interventions would be scaled up. They supported continued assistance in the area of reproductive health They inquired about activities that had not been implemented.

152. The UNFPA Geographical Division Directors thanked the delegations for their encouraging comments and noted that comments on specific draft country programmes would be conveyed to the concerned countries.

153. The Executive Board approved the two-year extension of the Zimbabwe country programme; and took note of the Note on the implementation of the UNFPA special programme of assistance to Myanmar. The Board also took note of the

following draft country programme documents and the comments made thereon: Angola, Burundi, Madagascar, Islamic Republic of Iran; Philippines, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

XVI. Evaluation

154. Delegations thanked the Director, Division for Oversight Services for her introduction and commended the high quality and transparency of the evaluation report (DP/FPA/2004/12). They were pleased to note the increased resources devoted by UNFPA to evaluation and to building staff competence in results-based management. They commended UNFPA for moving towards a vision of evaluation as a systemic learning tool.

155. Delegations welcomed UNFPA efforts to use local experts in conducting evaluations. They welcomed the thematic evaluation of UNFPA support to national capacity development. One delegation asked how the Fund was taking into account the recommendations from that evaluation. Delegations encouraged UNFPA to continue joint evaluation work with national authorities and other development partners while commending the joint evaluations undertaken before adoption of a new UNDAF. One delegation asked if under the new system traditional evaluations would disappear.

156. One delegation asked if there was a mechanism to ensure that lessons learned were fed into the Fund's systems and how lessons and good practices were shared within UNFPA and with its partners. One delegation recommended continued training for staff, including joint training with other United Nations organizations. The importance of improving planning and monitoring was emphasized.

157. Delegations inquired about the challenges UNFPA faced in participating in sector-wide approaches (SWAps) and asked how donor and other countries could help. One delegation asked why two countries had been unable to carry out mandatory evaluations. Another suggested that in the future it would be useful to have an annual evaluation work plan.

158. The Director, Division for Oversight Services, thanked the delegations for their positive comments. She assured the Executive Board that UNFPA would continue using national experts for evaluations. She noted that the UNDAF process presented increased opportunities to the United Nations country teams for joint evaluations. Regarding the use of evaluation findings, she underscored that findings and lessons learned were very much used at the country-level and were fed back into the planning process. Lessons were also shared with the United Nations country team in the context of the UNDAF, as well as with other development partners through working groups focused on evaluation issues and other interagency fora. She noted that UNFPA would continue to invest in staff training to develop capacity, including capacity-building at the country level.

159. Concerning the query on SWAps, she noted that UNFPA was strengthening its staff's technical knowledge and skills to enhance participation in SWAps. Regarding the two countries that had not undertaken evaluations, she clarified that in one country there had been a delay in the start of the country programme and an evaluation would be undertaken in the fourth year as required; regarding the other

country, she noted that due to inadequate baseline data an evaluation had not been feasible. She added that the country was aware of what needed to be done and was addressing the issue. Concerning the request for an annual evaluation work plan, she sought clarification and asked if it referred to the headquarters level evaluation plan. She pointed out that each country office would have its own monitoring and evaluation plan that would be in line with the stage of the particular programme.

160. She assured the Executive Board that traditional evaluations would continue. She concurred regarding the importance of an analytical approach to programme design and noted that it would lead to better quality monitoring and evaluation in due course. She concluded by underscoring the upward trend in the Fund's investment in evaluation.

161. The Executive Board took note of the Periodic report on evaluation (DP/FPA/2004/12).

XXI. Other matters

Presentation on a transition country: Timor-Leste

162. The presentation on Timor-Lest outlined the role of United Nations organizations in helping the country move from a post-conflict to a normal developing country situation. The Minister of Health, Timor-Leste, provided comments on the contribution of the United Nations system.

163. Delegations commended the United Nations system for its constructive role in Timor-Leste while highlighting the need for capacity building and recruitment of competent staff for specific tasks, especially in assisting countries to move from crisis to relief to development. The role of the United Nations Volunteers and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in rapid deployment was underscored, as was the strategic role of women in post-crisis situations.

UNFPA special event: "Putting People First: Implementing the ICPD Agenda and Achieving the MDGs"

164. The Executive Board Special Event Panel Discussion entitled "Putting People First: Implementing the ICPD Agenda and Achieving the MDGs" marked the tenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The panellists were: Mr. Serge Chappatte (Switzerland), Mr. Poul Nielson (European Commission), Professor Gita Sen (India), Dr. Jotham Musinguzi (Uganda), Dr. Nebiha Gueddana (Tunisia), Mr. Cheikh Hassan Cisse (Senegal), Ms. Gabriella Ocampo Jaramillo (Ecuador) and Mr. Damian Brown (Jamaica). The Executive Director of UNFPA chaired the panel discussion. The President of the Executive Board delivered a special message from the Secretary-General to mark the occasion. In his message, the Secretary-General underscored that the implementation of the ICPD agenda was essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.